

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BELGIAN MEDIA: CURRENT REACTION

1.ZAIRE

UNDER THE HEADING " ZAIRE: POLITICAL,NOT A MILITARY CONFLIT"
LIBERAL CATHOLIC DE STANDAARD APRIL 2 SAYS: "... THE KATANGANS
THEMSELVES HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A REAL
OFFENSIVE: THEY HAVE NOT EVEN ATTEMPTED TO OCCUPY THE MINING
CENTER OF KOLWEZI,WHICH WAS READY TO BE SEIZED IN THE EARLY
DAYS OF THE INVASION.THUS,THE REAL MEANING OF THE SHABA
AFFAIR HAS BEEN BARED.IT IS NOT A MILITARY OPERATION BUT A
POLITICAL CONFLICT,THE STAGE MANAGERS OF WHICH ARE IN
VARIOUS WHITE CAPITALS OF THE WESTERN AND THE EASTERN BLOC.
THE KATANGANS WERE USED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS TO TEST THE
DEFENSIBILITY OF THE MOBUTU REGIME.SUPPORTED BY ANGOLA AND
THUS INDIRECTLY BY CUBA AND THE SOVIETS,THEY RECEIVED
AUTHORIZATION TO HIT BELT NO MORE.IT IS NOW CLEAR
THATMOSCOW WAS NOT UP TO AN OPEN WAR IN AFRICA WHERE IT HAS
ENOUGH PROBLEMS ALREADY ELSEWHERE AND,LIKE IN ETHIOPIA,IS
DIGGING ITSELF IN DEEPER IN THE CONTRASTS.AT THE MOST THE
SOVIETS WANT TO UNDERMINE SOMEWHAT MORE THAT VITAL STRENGTH
OF THE WESTERN ALLY,ZAIRE.IN THE PAST,WASHINGTON WOULD HAVE
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REACTED TO THIS WITH A PROVOCATIVE INCREASE OF ITS MILITARY
SUPPORT,BUT WITH CARTER MATTER ARE DIFFERENT: RESENTMENT OF
MOBUTU AND FEAR OF AN AFRICAN VIETNAM ARE CLEARLY PUTTING A
BRAKE ON THE PRESIDENT.IN THIS VACUUM BETWEEN THE HALF-
HEARTED SOVIET TEASING AND THE AMERICAN HESITATIONS FRANCE
STEPPED IN TO PREVENT ZAIRE FROM CAPSIZING INTO A POLITICAL
CHAOS WHICH WOULD HAVE RUINED ALL CHANCES FOR AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.IT IS CERTAIN THAT IN DOING SO GISCARD ALSO HAD IN MIND THE FRENCH BUSINESS INTERESTS IN ZAIRE,BUT BRUSSELS IS IN A BAD POSITION TO ADDRESS REPRACHES TO PARIS. GISCARD IN ANY CASE HAS PLAYED THE EUROPEAN CARD,HIS PRECEDING CONTACTS WITH BONN,LONDON AND BRUSSELS LEAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THIS. GISCARD BELIEVES IN THE NEED AND THE FUTURE OF EURAFRICAN COOPERATION,AND THAT LINE OF THOUGHT IS SHARED BY TINDEMANS SCHMIDT,EC COMMISSIONER DAVIGNON,AND BY AFRICAN STATESMEN LIKE SENGHOR OF SENEGAL,HOUPOUET BOIGNY OF IVORY COAST AND HASSAN OF MORCCO..."

CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC LA LIBRE BELGIQUE APRIL 28 QUOTES ZAIRE AS SAYING: " THE LESSON OF SHABA IS VERY CLEAR EUROPE IS ON THE VERGE OF LOSING AFRICA,IF AFRICA CANNOT TRUST HER...

AS FOR PRESIDENT CARTER,LET US WEEP OVER HIS STATEMENTS.HE WOULD LIKE A STRICTLY DEMOCRATIC AFRICA,AMERICAN STYLE.IT IS RIDICULOUS TO ASK THAT FROM US.WE PASSIONATELY WISH THAT EVERYWHERE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS BE ENFORCED.BUT TODAY OUR PROBLEM IS TO SURVIVE.ISN'T SURVIVING THE FIRST OF HUMAN RIGHTS?AND THEREFORE WE NEED MORE THAN PIOUS WISHES.WE ASK THAT THE WEST ACCEPT US AS WE ARE WITH OUR WEAKNESSES AND OUR HOPES,WITHOUT ASKING FROM US VIRTUES WHICH WE ARE TOO POOR TO PRACTICE."

LABOR CATHOLIC LA CITE APRIL 28 WRITES THAT THE "SUBVERSIVE OPERATION..NOW COMING TO AN END WAS MERELY A 'TRIAL BALLOON,'" FOR IT IS THE ENTIRE AFRICAN CONTINENT WHICH IS ABOUT TO BE "DISTABILIZED".

2.US/USSR

UNDER THE HEADING: " THE COLD WAR WILL NOT TAKE PLACE " POL MATHIL DISCUSSES IN LE SOIR (APRIL 23)THE FEAR EXPRESSED BY SOME UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT CRITICISM OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS JEOPARDIZES DETENTE. " THE SOVIET THESIS IS CLEAR: ANY QUESTIONING OF THE WAY IT UNDERSTANDS HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS MAKING THE WORLD RETURN TO COLD WAR.IT IS AN IMPRESSIVE ARGUMENT SUFFICIENT IN ANY CASE TO CREATE IN SOME WESTERN CHANCERIES,WHICH ARE PREPARING THEIR CASES FOR BELGRADE,RESERVATIONS NOT TOWARD THOSE WHO VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS BUT TOWARD THOSE WHO LIKE PRESIDENT CARTER DARE TO TALK ABOUT IT OPENLY.BUT,THE SOVIET VIEW DOES NOT HOLD... THE WESTERN ATTITUDE REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION OR ELSEWHERE CAN HAVE ONLY A LIMITED IMPACT ON DETENTE. WHATEVER THIS ATTITUDE MAY BE,MOSCOW WILL PLAY THE CARD OF DETENTE SO LONG AS IT SERVES ITS INTERESTS.IN 1972 DIDN'T BRASHNEV INAUGURATE DETENTE BY DRINKING CHAMPAGNE IN THE KREMLIN AT THE VERY MOMENT WHEN THE AMERICAN BOMBS WERE LEVELING HANOI AND WERE KILLING SOVIET SAILORS IN THE HAIPHONG HARBOUR?" MATHIL CONTINUES THAT ALTHOUGH ONE SHOULD NOT FEAR TO AGGRAVATE THE KREMLIN, " IT IS NOT EVEN NECESSARY TO BRANDISH THE 'TERRIBLE' BASKET THREE,IF AN EXCESSIVE USE OF WHICH COULD ACTUALLY TURN BELGRADE INTO A KIND OF TRIBUNAL HARDLY TOLERABLE

TO THE SOVIET UNION. " FOR MATHIL,IT WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO REFER
TO PRINCIPLE NUMBER SEVEN OF THE HELSINKI CHARTER,WHICH SAYS THAT
THE GOVERNMENTS SIGNATORIES RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS. " TO PRETEND THAT
THE MENTION OF SUCH A TEXT IN BELGRADE COULD ENDANGER DETENTE WOULD
AMOUNT TO CONFUSING PRODUCENCE AND INDIFFERENCE,AND COOPERATION
WITH COMPLACENCY."

3.U.S.INVESTMENTS

IN SERIES WHICH HAS STESSED THE REDUCED COMPETITIVENESS OF
BELGIM AS PLACE FOR INVESTMENTS,ECONOMIC EDITOR JAN BOHETS IN
DE STANDAARD WRITES ABOUT US ECONOMY: " BANKER AND BUSINESSMEN
AGREE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY: DURING THE YEARS TO COME NOTHING WILL
OUTRANK THE UNITED STATES.AMERICAN HAS SHAKEN OFF VIETNAM AND
WATERGATE,AND COMPARED TO ITS COMPETITORS,HAS EMERGED
STRENGTHHNED FROM THE ECONOMIC CRISIS,PEOPLE IN EUROPE SEEM
TO REASON IN THE SAME MANNER,JUDGING BY THE INCREASE
OF EUROPEAN INVESTMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. " ITEM.

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